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SPECIFICATION AMENDMENT

Replace the first paragraph of the SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION on page 6 line 9 to correct an omission, – the missing critical element pointed out by the examiner

The present invention provides a method to detect cryptobiotic microorganisms by means of detecting emissions in the near-infrared arising from excitation of intrinsic components with light in the red region of the visible spectrum. The concepts of the present invention reside in a method and apparatus for the detection of cryptobiotic (dormant, spore-forming) microbes in which samples are exposed to electromagnetic radiation in the 610 nm – 680 nm region and detected from emissions in the 730 nm – 860 nm region. The spores to be sampled (more specifically the calcium dipicolinate contained therein) emit electromagnetic energy that can be measured. The collected emission signal emitted from the calcium pyridine dicarboxylic acid salts) is analyzed with a method capable of removing any background, reflected excitation energies and/or scattered light. Thus, the method and apparatus of the present invention provides an inexpensive and rapid way in which to scan samples to detect and quantitate the presence of microbial contamination without contact with the sample. Being able to evaluate microbial contamination in a sample without contact reduces the risk of introducing contamination.